

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (O/DCI)**

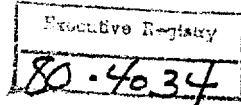
**Routing Slip**

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X (or 1a)		
2	DDCI		X		
3	DD/RM				
4	DD/NFA		X		
5	DD/CT				
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7	DD/O		X		
8	DD/S&T				
9	GC				
10	LC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/PA				
14	D/EE0				
15	D/Pers				
16	AO/DCI				
17	C/IPS				
18	C/IRan TF	X			
19	C/NE/TW		X		
20	PI/DCI		X		
21					
22					
SUSPENSE DATE:					

Remarks:

To 18: For comment to DCI.

Executive Secretary



April 18, 1980

AMERICAN DIGITAL SYSTEMS, INC.

Mr. Stanley Turner  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Abigniew Brzeninski  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

Senator Howell Heflin  
State of Alabama

Mr. Jody Powell  
Press Secretary to the President

Dear Mr. Turner:

The holding of the American hostages in Iran has inflicted such grief and inspired such rage in our citizenry that, inevitably, the temptation to become "armchair diplomats" has been too alluring for some. I realize that your offices have been deluged by proposed plans of action that are as charmed by their sincerity as they are flawed by their simplistic reasoning.

I have resolved to add yet another proposed plan of action to your in-boxes. I persuaded my father to allow me to submit this suggestion to you; it was his wish to send this proposal to some friends at NEWSWEEK for use in the "My Turn" column. I argued that the plan of action would be far more effective if the Iranians were not tipped off publically about our motivations. I hope that your offices will be able to take some action on this presentation promptly. If not, I know my father will lose patience and go ahead with his initial intention.

I believe that my father's enclosed proposal is distinguished both by the advantage his personal background affords, and by the elegance with which he addresses what we perceive to be the key issue to the Iranian crisis -- how to turn Iran's greatest vulnerability (the factionalism that divides these fanatics) into an effective American weapon.

My father worked for many years as a top contributor in the Research and Development efforts that spearheaded the American Space Program. He shares the agonizing frustration known to all who must watch and wait while the hostages are held. In the hope that some solution will be suggested as you read this proposal, I submit my father's own description of a way in which we might get the Iranians to release the hostages.

Sincerely,

Ralph Gregory Petroff  
Chairman of the Board  
AMERICAN DIGITAL SYSTEMS, INC.

HOW TO GET THE IRANIAN MILITANTS

TO

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RELEASE THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES

As one who was born in Bulgaria, I have always been intrigued by the similarity evident in the fanatic mentality shared by one ostensibly diverse group of people; the Turks, Bulgars, Afghans, Iranians, Arabs, etc. While there are religious reasons and overtones, I would trace this impassioned intranscience to the sheer orneriness of a people that have had to scratch out an existence for two thousand years from the sides of barren mountains.

My father, as a priest, did spend time in a Bulgarian prison. At the age of 91, he is still a practising Bulgarian Orthodox priest who is every bit as fanatical a Christian, as the Ayatollah Khomeini is a Moslem. The same long white beards and piercing eyes seem to reify the common character burning within.

For my own curiosity, I have been trying to figure out how the Bulgarians would be acting if it were they who were holding the hostages instead of the Iranians. So far, I think the Iranians have behaved exactly as the Bulgarians would have. If you could figure out a scheme to get the mythical Bulgarians to release the hostages, then the same scheme would probably work on the Iranians as well.

Let's examine the options:

- 1) Military Option: Countries like Bulgaria and Iran have been consistent losers in war and politics for thousands of years. They have been routinely conquered by all manner of foreign invaders. Because of this, the few national heroes that attempt to resist the trampling feet of foreign domination have one thing in common -- glorious martyrdom. If military action were threatened against Bulgaria in a similar hostage situation, there would be a mad stampede of potential martyrs who would tear out each others eyeballs vying for the adoration of their beleaguered people. And no wonder -- all who would die would become national heroes; twenty generations of school children would read about them, and priests would pray for their souls for centuries afterwards. It would be Bulgaria's finest hour.
- 2) The Sanctions Approach: This wouldn't work either. Assuming an effective economic blockage could be maintained, it would take months to "bring Iran to its knees". Even at this point, crippling the country by seige would probably have these effects:

- a. stiffen the country's resolve to keep the hostages, and to follow the Ayatollah, revelling in the world-wide sorrow that mourned the extermination of innocent peasants who never heard of any hostages;
- b. increase the likelihood of spontaneous violence against the hostages;
- c. benefit the communist and other such groups who can stir a popular insurgency against the hostages and the U.S. government.

So that option will not work. What is left?

- 3) The third, and uniquely viable option is to outsmart them. The key to getting the hostages back to the U.S. is to get the militants embarrassed into releasing them to the more moderate Iranian government. The only way our mythical Bulgarian captors would release the hostages would be if they were hit where it really hurts -- in their pride.

The quickest way to release the hostages would be to make the students look and feel very stupid for keeping them. After all, the militants are now on a real ego trip, spitting in the eye of the big boy on the block. World opinion is continually focussed on them. Make them feel like fools and the ensuing national embarrassment will mean the militants will turn over the hostages to somebody -- anybody else, in order to get out of the spotlight.

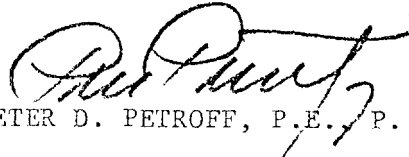
How will all this get accomplished? Suppose the American Congress were to pass a resolution stating that on each day (after a certain date) that the hostages continue to be held in captivity, each hostage would receive another tax free \$50,000 out of the frozen Iranian assets. The militants would feel that they had been "had". Every day they would have to endure the grins of their hostages, and more importantly, the contempt of fellow Iranians congratulating their militants on this brilliant system to impoverish their own country and reward their own captives. "Look what a mess you got us into" will be clearly flashed in the eyes of every person passing the embassy. The students would feel disowned. After about fifteen to twenty days the militants would no longer be able to endure the humiliation. They would find some pretext to give the hostages to their more moderate government with whom we could strike a deal.

While awaiting this resolution of the situation, we would not be without immediate gratification. The deposit system would ameliorate the hostages' anxiety about the date of their release. The thought that they would be able to spend the remainder of their days in relaxed comfort would serve to reduce the acute duress of an additional three to four weeks captivity. In addition, this arrangement would ease the horrible anxiety experienced by the hostages' families; there would be some tangible remuneration accumulating. While a fortune could never erase the agony of waiting and worrying, it certainly would lessen the concern for their future welfare.

Furthermore, the plan would satisfy the American popular demand for some sort of non-violent vengeance against the Iranian captors. The United States would earn world-wide respect for the cunning with which they extricated themselves from a very difficult situation.

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Of course, this would probably not influence Khomeni -- but once the hostages are out of the militant's hands, an end run could be made around Khomeni by appealing to Bani Sadr and the other Iranians who wanted the hostages to be released all along. This solution is not fool-proof, of course, but it is far more realistic than the brute force options. Besides, it would be gratifying to turn the tables on those pompous, pious thugs at the embassy, and have the world laughing at them for a while.



PETER D. PETROFF, P.E., P. Eng., Dipl. Ing.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, EMERITUS  
AMERICAN DIGITAL SYSTEMS, INC.